MMUNISM, SCIENCE *and* CULTURE

Drawing by Franz Masereel

JACQUES DUCLOS

Vice-President, French Chamber of Deputies

COMMUNISM, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

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FRENCH CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The following speech was given before a group of almost a thousand outstanding French intellectuals and professionals. The meeting was arranged by the House of Culture of Paris, in response to inquiries from a number of its members regarding the position of the Communist Party on various cultural and scientific questions.

Louis Aragon, General Secretary of the Federation of Houses of Culture of France, asked the Secretariat of the French Communist Party for an official spokesman to address this meeting. Jacques Duclos, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, was selected.

On June 1, 1938, at the Centre Marcelin-Berthelot in Paris, Duclos delivered this speech before an audience of some of the most distinguished representatives of national art and letters, science and engineering, the medical, legal and teaching professions. Among those present were the Nobel prize winners, Frédéric and Mme. Joliot-Curie; the authors Louis Cazamian, Léon Pierre-Quint, Andrée Viollis, Maurice Martin du Gard and René Lalou; the composers Arthur Honegger, Georges Auric and Charles Koechlin; the painters Fernand Leger, Marcel Gromaire and Franz Masereel; Professor Marcel Cohen of the Sorbonne, famed Orientalist, and his colleague at the College de France, Professor Henri Wallon; the well-known city-planner, Le Corbusier, and the architect Jean Lurçat; the historians Auguste Cornu and Hadamard; and two members of the Chamber of Deputies, Joanny Berlioz and Georges Cogniot, respectively the *rapporteurs* on the Fine Arts and National Education budgets.

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COMMUNISM, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

A number of intellectuals having expressed a desire to know what the French Communist Party thinks about major problems of the day as well as about certain problems of general interest to the élite of French thought, the House of Culture had the happy idea of organizing tonight's meeting.

In presenting the ideas of the Communist Party, I wish first of all, ladies and gentlemen, to thank you for having replied to the invitations sent to you, and I wish also to thank the House of Culture and its General Secretary, Aragon, for having given us the opportunity to explain our ideas before this splendid gathering.

But I cannot thank the House of Culture, whose remarkable growth I wish to greet, without calling up the memory of its founder, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, who, in his ardent desire to defend culture against the barbarous forces of destruction and in his passionate desire to work for the liberation of man, gave himself completely to the great cause of Communism.

This meeting seems all the more opportune since it enables us to present ourselves as we are; for we are not unaware that our Party is calumniated by some and doubtless poorly known by others. We know that there are men whose opinions on Communism and the Communists are so often based upon preconceived ideas, not to say prejudices. We also know that intentions are often ascribed to us

which we do not have, and we are equally aware that some men of good faith look upon us with a certain mistrust because they ascribe plans to us which we have never conceived.

For some, we negate the past, we negate individual values. For others, we are fanatics without human feelings. For still others, we are utopians who take no account of reality, or indeed, realists without ideals.

We are none of these, and I am happy to be able, in the name of my Party, to explain our position to a gathering whose critical spirit constitutes not the least of its qualities. I know that if for some people, to mistrust the Communists *a priori* is to give proof of a critical spirit, for you who represent the world of intellectuals, the critical spirit consists first of all in breaking the hold of ready-made ideas.

I

It is not widely enough known that while we are a Party able to discern what is possible from what cannot be achieved at the given moment, we are moving, above and beyond the limited political objectives corresponding to the situation at the moment, towards a great goal which can be summarized in this way: We want to free man from all things which restrict his physical and intellectual development. We desire that man's energy should no longer be turned against himself, but should be employed to master the forces of nature. We take up today one of the oldest dreams of mankind, but we take it up knowing that it can now become a reality by the very fact of the amplitude of man's scientific and technical conquests. Thus we can say that Communism is the modern expression of all human

aspirations to happiness, to truth, to fraternity, aspirations which since the most ancient civilizations and under the most varied forms have haunted the minds of men.

But in taking up these old dreams of men, we are not at all utopians, we are consistent realists. The human aspiration to control the forces of nature is as old as the oldest civilizations, but never in their dreams have the men of the past dared to hope for what we have achieved today. Science, the daughter of man, has permitted him to dominate nature; tomorrow she will permit still firmer domination. But if it is true, in the famous words of Bacon, that "man rules nature by obeying her," it is also true that you cannot rule history except by obeying her, which presupposes a knowledge of the development of human societies.

The man who shares with Karl Marx the glory of having founded scientific socialism, Frederick Engels, gave a magnificent definition in his book, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific,* of the conditions in which men will achieve control of their own history, that is, the passage from the epoch of necessity to the epoch of freedom:

> The possibility of securing for every member of society, through social production, an existence which is not only fully sufficient from a material standpoint and becoming richer from day to day, but also guarantees to them the completely unrestricted development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility now exists for the first time, but it does exist.
>
> The seizure of the means of production by society puts an end to commodity production, and therewith to the domination of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by conscious organization on a planned basis. The struggle for individual existence comes to an end. And at this point, in a certain sense, man finally cuts himself

off from the animal world, leaves the conditions of animal existence behind him and enters conditions which are really human. The conditions of existence forming man's environment, which up to now have dominated man, at this point pass under the dominion and control of man, who now for the first time becomes the real, conscious master of nature, because and in so far as he has become master of his own social organization. The laws of his own social activity, which have hitherto confronted him as external, dominating laws of nature, will then be applied by man with complete understanding, and hence will be dominated by man.

Men's own social organization, which has hitherto stood in opposition to them as if arbitrarily decreed by nature and history, will then become the voluntary act of men themselves. The objective, external forces which have hitherto dominated history, will then pass under the control of men themselves. It is only from this point that men, with full consciousness, will fashion their own history; it is only from this point that the social causes set in motion by men will have, predominantly and in constantly increasing measure, the effects willed by men. It is humanity's leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom.*

Have we not the right to say that Communism is the synthesis of the oldest human aspirations and the most highly developed science? We represent a doctrine based upon a scientific knowledge of human society and therefore we are men of reason; we are the most consistent rationalists because we carry out to the end the consequences of reason. We are the inheritors of all those who throughout history have struggled, at the price of great suffering, to establish the reign of reason and to dismantle piece by piece the mighty fortress of dogma and prejudice.

We claim the heritage of a Descartes, of whom the greatest of our Utopian Socialists, Saint-Simon, said:

* Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 185-186. International Publishers, New York.

It was Descartes who organized the scientific insurrection. It was he who drew the line of demarcation between ancient and modern science; it was he who planted the banner around which the physicists rallied to attack the theologians; he wrested the image of the world from the hands of imagination to place it in the hands of reason; he posed the celebrated principle—man should only believe things admitted by reason and confirmed by experience—a principle which was a lightning bolt to superstition, a principle which has changed the moral face of our planet.

We are the inheritors of the philosophers of the eighteenth century who gave such hard blows to obscurantism, who defended the cause of man against a society doomed by history.

We are, in a word, the inheritors of all the humanists, of all those who believed in man and his worth, who fought to defend man. We desire the full development of man, we want him to develop his abilities to the utmost without hindrance.

This purported respect for the individual which some persons profess—what does it tend towards if not to place the individual in a competition in which he may go under? As against this false individualism, which covers a reality of compulsion and social injustice by the cloak of an alleged liberty, we uphold the true conception of respect for the individual based upon the opportunity for each person to develop his capabilities to the full.

But we know that this great objective comes into conflict with the economic, political and social realities of capitalism, which set private interests against human interests, which stifle the individual under the weight of society. We are not content merely to take note of this; we fight everything which serves the private interests that are opposed to the interests of the human community, and that is why

those who benefit by social injustice reserve their attacks and their lies for us.

But you who know that nothing has been done, whether in the field of science, thought or art, without a bitter and persevering struggle, will also understand that nothing can be achieved in the field of social progress without a struggle against the same prejudices and the same interests which the pioneers of human culture meet on their path. We Communists, who are fighters, know that the intellectuals are likewise fighters, since science is the noblest and perhaps the most bitter of struggles.

I could mention numerous scientists whose life was a veritable battle and whose scientific discoveries came into conflict with implacable official truth. Quite naturally, in this train of ideas, one name comes to mind, a name which has become a symbol, the name of Galileo, who, for his defense of Copernicus' system of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and his discoveries which brought striking confirmation of this system, was compelled to retract before the Inquisition, which tried him as a heretic. But the celebrated remark, *"eppur si muove"* ["and still it moves"], uttered by Galileo after his retraction, was a challenge hurled by science against the forces of obscurantism. Today, no one would think of upholding the thesis of those who condemned Galileo. Science has finally emerged victorious.

Closer to our day, Pasteur likewise saw his discovery of microbes violently combated; and this shows clearly that science in its forward march comes into conflict with routine, with accepted principles, with official dogmas. But Pasteur has had his revenge, and his glory as a benefactor of humanity reflects upon our country, while nothing remains of the attacks of his detractors except one proof

more of the difficulties which science meets in clearing, step by step, the path to truth.

In the field of thought and art as well as in that of science, the creators, those who wish to leave the beaten path, those who seek, those who wish to go forward, cannot make progress except by fighting. They can, at each stage of their struggle, measure how great is the resistance offered by selfish interests to the free development of thought, science and culture.

As for us Communists, we conceive the development of culture only as within the most complete freedom—

Freedom for the scientist to seek and discover without fear of seeing his discoveries go to waste if they run counter to one or another special interest.

Freedom for the thinker, for the writer, to express human aspirations without having to fear a quarantine, a boycott by the moneyed powers.

Freedom for the artist to express the joy, the sorrow, the wrath, the love and the hope of man, without having to spare special interests.

Freedom for the intellectual to express himself unhampered, without being subjected to the demands of those who, because they have material wealth at their disposal, tend to treat the mind as a commodity.

That is what we desire, that is the great goal of the spiritual liberation of mankind towards which we are striving, we men of the people, with the certainty that through the people will be established the reign of intelligence in a liberated mankind. To free the spirit from the power of money and the forces of oppression, to make possible the free development of human values—this is our ambition, and we can think of no limitation to freedom except the necessity to defend man against the forces of regression.

To allow those who reject human progress, who make of violence a kind of religion, who demand that man be able to wield the sword better than the pen, those who mock "crammed, educated heads," those who wish to eradicate from the sum total of human knowledge whatever does not serve their mania for destruction, those for whom force is superior to right—to allow freedom of action to the enemies of liberty is not at all to respect the free choice of the individual. It is to surrender man to the obscurantist forces of barbarism, to help the assassins of liberty. There should be no liberty for the assassins of liberty, as Saint-Just proclaimed, no more than the criminal should have the liberty to murder his neighbor.

Freedom to go forward in the path of progress, and the indispensable defense of society against those who desire to turn it backwards—that is what the interest of the human community demands.

The modern barbarians shout their scorn for human civilization and they make everything start with themselves, as if before them nothing had existed. For them neither the builders of the cathedrals which were one of the moments of human civilization, nor the anonymous monks who did not allow the flame of culture and knowledge to be extinguished in the night of the Middle Ages, have any importance. For them neither the pioneers of free thought, like John Huss, Savanarola, Etienne Dolet, who sacrificed their lives for their ideas, nor the philosophers and thinkers who opened up new horizons for the human mind, have any importance.

In the face of these negators of the past, the Communists are conscious of continuing the work of all those who throughout the centuries have contributed to advancing humanity along the hard road of civilization. We are what we are, and we can dream of successfully fulfilling the great

and noble task of human liberation, only upon the foundation of the centuries of effort of which we are at once the inheritors and the beneficiaries. The enlightened criticism of a Montaigne; the magnificent optimism of a Rabelais battling against the prejudices, ignorance and injustices of his epoch; the satire, so profound and so human, of a Molière—all of which played such a great role in the formation of modern thought—struck hard blows against the old feudal society, which carried within itself the elements of the capitalist society due to succeed it on the stage of history.

The mission of the intellectuals is to be the heralds, to precede the great mass of the human flock along the road of progress. The French Revolution, which was a stage in human progress, was preceded and in a certain sense heralded by Diderot and his comrades-in-arms, whose philosophical materialism was later to be used by Marx and Engels in forging dialectical materialism, that admirable instrument of analysis and understanding.

It is because the light of Marxism permits us to understand human history and to grasp the succession of facts and the succession of struggles which, since the most distant ages, have made society what it is, and it is because we are conscious of continuing the civilizing work of the past, that we proclaim ourselves the guardians of the cultural heritage accumulated throughout the bygone centuries.

The people are with us in the first ranks of the defenders of culture, the benefits of which nonetheless have not been granted them with sufficient *largesse;* but in defending this highly precious thing, culture, the people defend not only the present, but also the future.

With the people we are defending the spiritual values trampled underfoot by the barbarians, and we go further

still in this task of protection of the heritage of the past. We who are atheists, for whom the problem of freedom of religious belief is not posed as for the believer, since we have passed that stage of human thought—we defend freedom of conscience against fascist barbarism because we do not want humanity to be dragged centuries backwards.

No doubt our materialist profession of faith has given rise to certain commentaries which do not always bear the earmark of good faith; but you know what must be thought of certain crass interpretations of materialism, which some persons would like to present as the doctrine of the satisfaction of the lowest instincts. Thousands upon thousands of Communists in all countries, dying like true apostles for the cause of Communism and human progress, have showed the greatness of the ideal which moves us, and we can say that there are no greater idealists than the materialists we are.

Moreover, this is what the Rev. Fr. Ducatillon has written in this regard:

> The truth is that, far from wishing to destroy human greatness, Communist materialism claims on the contrary to establish it upon its true, real basis, to save it from the fictions, the illusions, the lies of idealism. It is a conscious consideration of man in his total reality facing the great realities of the world and life.

We think that life, to be worthy of being lived, must be inspired by a great ideal; that is why we do not wish, at any cost, to allow humanity to founder in the abyss of shame and horror of the modern barbarism, whose credo is nothing else than the destruction of the conscience, the exaltation of bestiality, the deification of obscurantism, racial hatred, violation of contracts, the cult of brutality and the scorn of man.

It was in order to spare our native land such a cruel fate that we became the ardent defenders of the unity of the masses of the people of France. We have united with men who do not go as far as we do insofar as the future of human society is concerned, we have united with men who doubtless halt at a kind of congealed social order but who likewise do not desire a return to the past; and this unity has for its supreme goal to prevent our country from falling under the domination of the Huns of the twentieth century. Because we are convinced of the necessity for unity, we who are confirmed atheists extend a fraternal hand to the Catholics, whose struggle for the defense of their faith cannot be separated at the present moment from resistance to those who despise human progress.

We have been accused of preaching ideological crusades. We have been accused even of desiring war.

There are indeed people in Europe who are waging an ideological crusade. The man who rules the Italian people has not hesitated to say that "the Europe of tomorrow will be fascist," while his overlord in Berlin threatens our country with annihilation.

Moreover we cannot help calling to mind the unhappy land of Cervantes, victim of a foreign aggression which makes even Franco Spaniards blush with shame and seethe with indignation. We are heart and mind with the Spanish Republicans, who by defending the independence of their fatherland are defending the security of our homes at the same time. Many tears and much sorrow could have been spared if, at the onset of the events which are drowning the Iberian peninsula in blood, the Government of the Spanish Republic had not been deprived of the right to obtain freely the means of victory.

Rome and Berlin want the victory of Franco against France. What can we think, then, of the attitude of certain

Frenchmen who likewise praise Franco? Are these men unaware of what is said about our country in Franco territory? Are they unaware that there it is "odious France" that is spoken of? Are they unaware that our country is treated as a "country of abnormal people" whose "last hour is drawing near"? Or indeed, knowing all this, are not these men in our country demonstrating the decadence of their sense of nationhood?

In truth the defense of our country cannot be separated from the defense of peace, and we cannot hope to save peace except by the firmness which will make those whose successes have only been the result of too many hesitations and lamentable weaknesses think twice. The recent international events help prove that it is not by capitulation, but by firm resistance that the nations of prey can be made to think twice.

That is why we are not among those who say, in a kind of exaltation of cowardice, "Rather slavery than death." We do not want slavery, with abdication of our convictions, resignation of the spirit, trampling of human values and renunciation of all ideals, all the more since in the last analysis this slavery leads to death. But no more do we want death, and for this reason we will defend peace energetically against all capitulations, all submissions, which some people may claim to impose upon our country. We want our France to live free, independent, happy and respected, but we know that one of the principal obstacles to the realization of this hope is the criminality of the all-powerful economic aggregations which speculate upon the Stock Exchange, manoeuver within the deliberating bodies of the government and influence the activities of those who govern. The representatives of the Money International, whose sentiments and interests are as un-national as is possible, are the most furious in slandering the Communists,

in presenting the workers, peasants, small businessmen and intellectuals who form our Party, as a mass of traitors, men without a country and hirelings of Moscow.

It is the fate of the defenders of the people to be attacked and slandered. Jean Jaurès paid with his life for the vile campaigns against him by men who today still pursue their despicable work. Those who slander us continue in the tradition. It is enough today for a journalist, even though reactionary, to permit himself not to greet in Franco a friend of France and not to see in Hitler the victim of a despicable ideological crusade, to be accused of being in the pay of Moscow. Hasn't the Pope himself been accused of Bolshevism by the Nazis? Consequently we do not attach any more importance than is due to the slanders which try to discredit us, to discredit the working people without whom neither the greatness nor the prosperity of France can be conceived.

We proclaim our admiration for the great social and human experiment being victoriously carried through in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and we are not the only ones who know that it constitutes one of the essential factors in the defense of peace. We are proud when we think that the revolutionary history of France has played, through the lessons flowing from it, a specific role in the revolutionary actions of Lenin, who liberated the Russian people by taking into account the particular situation in his country, just as we wish to liberate the French people in a French way. It is this profound conviction which stirs us when we say that the policy of France cannot be decided in Rome, Berlin or London, nor even in Moscow, but in Paris.

We, who are friends of all peoples and ardent internationalists, take up again the slogan of Jean Jaurès: "A little internationalism turns one away from the fatherland,

a greater internationalism returns one to it." And we take up, too, the magnificent formula of Vaillant-Couturier defining the mission of French Communists: "We are continuing France."

Yes, we are continuing France, with veneration for the past, with full understanding of the necessities of the present and with a very clear vision of the future to be prepared, but we know that nothing great and lasting can be achieved without the cooperation of the intellectuals, whose merits no doubt have been recognized, but whose rights remain to be proclaimed.

II

The problem raised is to know what place science and scientists ought to play in the community.

The scientists, the seekers, the men whose efforts should compel the respect and attention of all—do they have sufficient funds for research at their disposal? Can they give free, unhampered course to their creative genius? Are laboratories what they ought to be in a civilized society where civilization is respected? Evidently not; and when from time to time the newspapers pay homage to some American billionaire or other who has just subsidized one or another scientific work, they underline by that very fact the great poverty of scientific institutions in France.

But who, therefore, can accept without a sense of humiliation the state of affairs which, in far too many instances, places science under the patronage of the rich and replaces by private initiative that which the State ought to display? We cannot accept that the activity of the scientist should be made dependent, for any reason whatsoever, upon the

generosity of a wealthy patron. We cannot accept either that the funds placed at the disposition of scientists should be determined by haphazard private generosity—which besides is not always unselfish,—by the fluctuations of business, by the quantity of surplus value appropriated by one or another big capitalist who plays the part of patron. Such a state of affairs throws light on the subjugation of science to blind economic forces in a society which lives under the sign of blind necessity.

To this can be added the fact that the deflation policy has had unfortunate results for science; and to cite only one example, I shall mention that more than a score of professors have been dismissed, not only in the provincial universities but also at the Sorbonne. It can also be added that the successive devaluations of the franc have reduced the real value of the funds allotted for science. This is why some scientific works must wait years for publication. The size of the funds allotted for science, in the final analysis, is really determined by the tax evaders, by the exporters of capital, by the speculators, by those to whom the poverty of the State gives a chance for profitable investments and effective political pressure.

There you have the subjugation of the mind to matter, with all the humiliation it can hold for man and the dignity of the intellect!

And then it must be told how heavily the cruel law of profits burdens the scientists. All of us know that there exist powerful trusts which have actual monopoly control, which regulate production, which divide the market among themselves and fix prices. Do you believe that these trusts remain inactive when the work of an inventor means that they may lose their monopolies? Woe unto the inventor who, in serving science and the interests of humanity, clashes with such powerful interests! A discovery, an inven-

tion consecrating the triumph of the intellect, expressing the victory of man over matter, can in the long run lead to a defeat of the mind before the coalition of financial interests.

Is it not true that, if not for hostile financial interests, the problem of the manufacture of synthetic gasoline in industrial quantities would have long since been solved? Is it not true too, that the existence of hostile capitalist interests is retarding the growth of television? In every field of creative activity we see science clashing with selfish considerations which are an obstacle to the development of human progress.

There you have the subjugation of the mind to matter, a subjugation which we Communists are determined to abolish in the interest of humanity and the interest of our country!

We are humiliated when we see how many ideas of French scientists are exploited abroad, while at home the necessary action has not been taken to draw the practical consequences from the creative manifestations of French genius.

In its period of greatness, which has been a moment in human progress, capitalism advanced science, a prerequisite for the development of an effective technique. Today capitalism is embarrassed by its powerful technique which breaks through the out-dated form of property. From that point on, instead of spurring the development of science, instead of marching forward for the perfecting of technique so as to complete man's domination over nature, capitalism, as if frightened by the anachronistic and the unjustifiable in its system, would like to halt the forward march of science. Thus we can now see men who pretend to be civilized, proclaiming themselves the theoreticians of the destruction of the machine.

An effort is also being made to have men believe that the harm is caused by science, an effort to raise a sort of wall against the progress of the human mind. They seem to say to the seekers: You are forbidden to wrest from nature new secrets which might further somewhat man's liberation from enslavement to matter and which might serve the cause of man's spiritual life.

There is a field in which, unfortunately, nothing brings a halt to the perfecting of technique, the field of the industry of death. On the contrary, nothing is done to halt the discovery of new explosives and more efficient means of slaughter; it is indeed that branch of production, if we may say so, which alone benefits by rational organization; but selfish interests which are at the bottom of an outdated society oppose the discovery, in other branches of industry, of new methods of production capable of increasing human happiness.

In certain circles they even go so far as to present the bombardment of open cities as a scientific method of race selection. Thus an officer of the Reichswehr published an article in the magazine, *Archiv für Biologie und Rassengesellschaft,* in which we read:

> It is the most populous districts which will have to suffer most. Now, these districts are inhabited by poor people who have not succeeded in life, the disinherited of the community who thereby would be put out of the way.... On the other hand, the explosion of great bombs weighing a ton and more, in addition to the deaths caused, would inevitably result in numerous cases of insanity. Persons with weak nervous systems would not be able to stand the shock. Thus the bombardment would aid us in discovering the neurasthenics and placing them aside from social life. Once these invalids are discovered, it will only remain to sterilize their offspring, which will assure the selection of the race.

There you have the subjugation of the mind to matter, in its most inhuman and barbarous form!

We cannot be surprised that in such conditions there should be a revival of obscurantism. At the present time, that which seemed definitely established is being questioned—as we could see, thanks to the excellent initiative taken by the House of Culture in organizing a debate on Darwinism, under the chairmanship of Professor Lapicque, between Professor Prenant and Professor Lemoine, who took his stand as an adversary of the theory of evolution.

While in the field of biology efforts are thus made to drag us backwards, in the field of philosophy there is a struggle against rationalism. It is not an accident that Descartes is attacked: it is because he raised confidence in reason to a principle. For reason shows the unlimited character of progress.

At the present time even the failure of science is proclaimed, which corresponds on the plane of thought to the preoccupations of the machine-destroyers upon the economic plane.

If these ideas which have already done such harm in other countries were allowed to acclimate themselves in France, we could see here, among us too, science and reason, already contested, both nailed to the pillory.

The negators of human progress are afraid of reason and they would like to stop the march of history. Man, dominated by the forces of nature, has conquered them and made possible greater victories tomorrow; but he remains dominated by blind economic forces; and to work to control these economic forces is to work to free man, to free the human mind.

In working to free the human mind, we place ourselves in the lineage of the great intellectuals of the eighteenth century who were true battlers for enlightenment. Saint-

Simon could write: "Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, Diderot and d'Alembert appealed to the partisans of the ideas of Bacon, Descartes, Locke and Newton, they brought them into alliance, they placed themselves at the head of this army of physicists to attack the theologians." No one can deny that the scientific militancy of these intellectuals was one of the elements of the mighty scientific and cultural expansion of France.

Later the Great French Revolution was to exalt science and the arts in terms which merit being recalled. On December 18, 1793, a people's representative to the Convention, Citizen Mathieu, in protesting against plans for the destruction of libraries, which he thought could have been formulated only by agents of Pitt, was able to say:

> It is up to the National Convention to do today for the arts, for the sciences, for the progress of philosophy, what the arts, the sciences and philosophy have done to bring the reign of liberty: they also are creditors of the Revolution for whom the Revolution should do everything. Darkness means slavery.

This would demonstrate, if it were still necessary, that the struggle of the people for their liberation cannot be separated from the defense of the spiritual values of humanity.

And, as if echoing this solicitude for science which animated the men of the French Revolution, only a few days ago, speaking before scientists and professors, Stalin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, expressed all the solicitude of Soviet democracy for science and its pioneers. Stalin exalted the flourishing of science, "of such science whose devotees, while realizing the force and significance of the traditions established in science and making skillful use of them in the interests of science, yet refuse to be slaves to these traditions; of science which has the daring and deter-

mination to shatter old traditions, standards, and methods when they become obsolete, when they turn into a brake on progress, and which is able to establish new traditions, new standards, new methods."

And he added:

> In the course of its development science has known quite a number of courageous people who have been able to shatter the old and establish the new, regardless of, and in the teeth of, all obstacles. Such men of science as Galileo, Darwin, and many others are widely known. I should like to dwell on one such coryphaeus of science who is, at the same time, the greatest man of modern times. I have in mind Lenin, our teacher, our mentor.*

Lenin never missed an opportunity to emphasize the contribution of French thought to the work of human civilization, and he particularly insisted upon the close bond which exists between the philosophical materialism of the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century and the dialectical materialism of the founders of scientific socialism. More even than in France, the Encyclopedists, and particularly Diderot, are not only honored, but also studied in the Soviet Union, which is witness to the immense role these men played in the history of mankind.

We are convinced that this glorious tradition of French intellectuals, fighters for scientific thought, can and must soar upwards once again. Doubtless the forces of obscurantism are trying to deprive France of her great renown as a rationalist nation, which wins her such hatred and such curses from the armed prophets of a new Middle Ages. But science—must it be said?—will resist the assaults of ignorance, and we are sure that French intellectuals feel a legitimate pride at the thought that once more our coun-

* *In Praise of Learning*, p. 4. International Publishers, New York.

try is placed by history in the first ranks of the defenders of reason and human progress.

It is because we are conscious of the greatness of this mission which falls to the lot of French science that we protest against the miserliness of the funds placed at the disposal of our scientists. My friend Georges Cogniot, *rapporteur* on the National Education budget, is increasing his efforts to obtain an increase in the funds allotted to science to the amount required, but he comes into conflict in this field, as elsewhere, with the peremptory argument of the poverty of the state. We know too well that this argument has its origin in the malevolent selfishness of the alliance of special interests, which unquestionably are being handled all too weakly. When we know that newly-equipped laboratories do not have the normal funds with which to function, which obliges their directors to take steps to acquire elsewhere what is indispensable, and when we think of the scandalous inadequacy of the funds allotted to student scholarships for higher education, we have a right to say that it is indispensable and urgent to change something in this whole set-up.

The truth is, the funds allotted to science should be determined by the needs of scientific research and not be abandoned to the hazard of budgetary vicissitudes. Having just seen the third devaluation of the franc put into effect, we have a double duty: that of insisting vigorously upon the necessity of urgently proceeding to a readjustment of the allotted funds of science, a necessary consequence of the depreciation of the franc; but, moreover, we cannot think that readjustment would be sufficient. The truth is, French science for far too long a time has had at its disposal means which are notoriously below its needs and the possibilities of France.

And then, however painful it is to say it, we are faced by the difficult problem of adequate salaries and pensions. We think that steps should be taken to shelter scientists from material cares, to permit them to devote themselves without restriction to their work. It is a sorry fact, but a fact, that in a few seconds a speculator can "earn," since that is the word used, sums larger than those assured by the Nobel Prize.

The defense of science and the scientists constitutes for every man a duty toward civilization. This is the thought and the rule of action of the Communists.

III

Permit me now to tell you what the Communist Party thinks about the problems of literature and the situation of the writers.

Often a conception of literature is ascribed to us which is not our own. In the first place, we do not at all confuse literature with political propaganda, and we think that a man cannot be considered a great literary figure solely because of his political beliefs. It is a well-known fact that Marx had a great admiration for a writer who was far from sharing his political opinions but who, it can be said, drew a magnificent and faithful portrait of the society of the first half of the nineteenth century, Honoré de Balzac. We too, love Balzac and we admire the sincerity which he displayed in regard to human relations.

Doubtless there are persons for whom Balzac and his contemporaries of the past century count very little. Thus there are some who speak of the "stupid nineteenth cen-

tury," * and have even gone so far as to give credence to the legend of a ridiculous and stupid Victor Hugo. For those who know how to read the book of history, the fact remains that we cannot separate the nineteenth century from the work of Victor Hugo, who was a moment of French literature.

We do not write history in the fashion of those "scissors-men," of whom Diderot has already spoken, who suppress from the past everything which disturbs their calculations and who are unable to grasp historical evolution in all its complexity. We do not amuse ourselves by seeing only the grand side or the poverty of a century; we see each epoch as produced by a preceding epoch and moving towards a new epoch.

Is not the history of French literature indissolubly bound up with the very history of France? Everything proves that a lasting literature can only be the expression, or the reflection, of human history on the march. It is just because we see history in movement that we understand the past, with everything which differentiates it from the present, and that we understand the present, with everything which binds it to the past. Thus we conceive the mission of the writer as a mission of sincerity, not only in regard to himself, but in regard to history.

Without wishing to make M. Jacques Bardoux, of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, a writer in the proper sense of the word, I shall nonetheless permit myself to indicate the low esteem which he places upon sincerity. In an article in the *Revue de Paris* of November 1, 1936, M. Jacques Bardoux attributes to Dimitroff the following phrase: "If we do not succeed in diverting the

* A phrase popularized by the fascist author Léon Daudet, who wrote under this title attacking the progressive movements of the nineteenth century.—*Trans.*

forces of German fascism towards other countries, we shall not be able to remove the danger which menaces the Soviet State, where the proletariat of all countries finds a true fatherland for the first time. Only a Government of the People's Front in France can take upon itself to draw such an attack."

M. Bardoux purely and simply invented the quotations which he needed, or else they were invented for him. In fact, he claims to have taken this quotation from a pamphlet entitled, "Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International." Now, anyone can verify that the text of M. Bardoux is not to be found anywhere in the pamphlet. Furthermore, this pamphlet contains resolutions and not a speech by Dimitroff.

Wishing to show more precision, M. Jacques Bardoux then quotes page 59 of a pamphlet entitled, "The Path of the Communist International," which only has 53 pages, and furthermore does not contain a speech by Dimitroff either. The words attributed to Dimitroff cannot be found either in this pamphlet or elsewhere. I do not wish to insist upon what might have motivated such a lack of the most elementary honesty, no more than I wish to insist upon the true genesis of such a literary production designed to furnish apologies for Japanese imperialism.

All this, in truth, has nothing to do with literature, but if I thought it necessary to speak of it, it is because forgery has been raised by some to the height of principle and patriotism lowered to the utilization of forgery.

But the sincerity of the writer cannot be limited to the material exactness of his story. The writer lives in a real society, and if it is true that he does not in any way have to become an active political worker, he will be a writer worthy of the name only if he remains independent of the forces which wish to maintain the exploitation of man by

man. There can be no great literature produced by men who falsify history and who wish to twist it arbitrarily to the needs of a policy bucking the current of history itself. Those who have reached this point have shown at once their partiality and the immorality of their judgments, being condemned to an angry hostility to change and a sterile repetitiousness.

There is no need to insist, after all I have said, upon our opinions concerning literature, which we want to be healthy, living, true. Some claim that pornographic literature and that which wallows in moral corruption are advanced phenomena. No, no, pornography has never been and never will be revolutionary, no more than immorality. Very much to the contrary. Together with our teachers in socialism, we consider it as the expression of capitalist relationships. Just as there is progress in the various fields of human activity, similarly we believe that there is also moral progress, and we consider the future of moral progress not as a decomposition of what exists but as the lifting of human relationships to a higher stage.

It is also thought in certain circles that literature, to be judged good by Communists, must idealize the proletariat. The working class does not need flatterers. It has a great mission to accomplish, a human mission, since it cannot liberate itself without liberating all mankind.

And then, we do not forget that the French writers are the trustees of our admirable language which has been formed all during the course of the centuries of our country's history. This language has carried beyond our frontiers the prestige of French thought, and it has become the world language of intellectuals. We think that it is a sacred duty for the writers of today to develop still further the spreading of this language, which is the magnificent product of the collaboration of the writers and the people, this

language which, it has been said, is recognized by all as the finest literary language in the world.

In society as we shall construct it, the writer will not run the risk of falling prey to the clash of contradictory interests, since these interests will have disappeared. He will be able freely to judge human values and affirm his personality without being subjected to the law of the market. Everyone knows that in the capitalist world the writer sees the product of his intellect transformed into a commodity of the market, subject to the caprices of style and the manoeuvers of speculators.

I have spoken of the poverty of the scientists. What has been said about them is no less true for the writers, whose rights have not been protected as they should be. The long-pending bill on reform of literary properties should finally be passed and put into effect; but in this regard, too, there are hostile forces which are opposed to the interests of the intellectuals.

Even if this law were passed, however, the situation of the writer would in no way be solved. What is needed is to raise the people towards culture, to create libraries whose existence would necessitate abundant literary production. When you know that in the Soviet Union there were published from 1933 to 1937 2,651,000 copies of 84 classic works by French authors and 2,000,000 copies of 88 works by contemporary French authors, and when we compare, proportionately, the sparsity of our editions to these impressive achievements, you can see all that has to be done to change such a state of affairs.

There can be found, if the desire exists, the material means to make possible a bold policy of the cultural development of the country.

Perhaps it is not widely enough known that the Communist Party considers the education of the masses of the

people to be one of its fundamental tasks. We know that capitalism is interested in keeping an important section of the population in ignorance, and this naturally cuts down the book markets. In working for the disappearance of this situation, we are conscious of serving both the interests of the people, who must be taught to enjoy reading and be given the opportunity to do so, and the interests of the writers, who must be given new readers in order to raise the cultural level of our people.

I hardly have to say that my considerations of a general kind concerning thinkers and writers, can be transposed for the most part to the plane of artistic activity. We think that it is necessary to educate the people in order to enable them to enjoy art and make them responsive to the highest expressions of artistic beauty. It is this concern for education of the people which guided the Political Bureau of our Party when, last summer, it visited the Exhibition of French Art, thereby wishing to give an example of the close union of art and the people.

We have admired living pictures of various periods of our history in the paintings of Fouquet, the Clouets, the Le Nain brothers, Chardin, Delacroix, Courbet and other great painters whose work has been continued in splendid fashion by the masters of modern French painting, Manet, Cézanne, Monet and Renoir. This great work cannot leave the people indifferent; it does not leave indifferent the Communist Party, which had a loyal friend in one of the greatest representatives of the new technique of painting, Paul Signac.

But if French painting occupies a big place in the world history of art, and if its glory penetrates everywhere, the painters just the same are too often in a difficult economic position, to say the least. Too often the work of a painter

becomes the object of speculation, and too often the artist is the victim of the speculators.

Not enough is done for beauty in France, not enough is done either for painting, or for sculpture, in which we have the work of Puget, Rude and Rodin, to name only these great masters.

As you know, the sculpture of Rodin, all strength and movement, does not please the Municipal Council of Paris.* His "Thinker" has disappeared from the Place du Panthéon, his "Victor Hugo" likewise vanished from the Garden of the Palais-Royal, and we all know the discussion which has arisen concerning his "Balzac." This is what I had occasion to write on November 4, 1936, in the name of the Secretariat of the Communist Party, to the President of the Committee formed to arrange the placing of Rodin's "Balzac," refused by the Society of Men of Letters, on a Paris public square:

The Communist Party, anxious to defend the great traditions of French art, instructs me to transmit to you the sum of 500 francs, a gift of the Paris workers to aid in repairing as rapidly as possible the injustice of which Rodin was the victim in 1893.

We consider with you that his "Balzac" must honor a public square of Paris on the occasion of the centenary of the *Human Comedy*.

Thus will be associated two names and two works which are numbered among the most characteristic and most worthy of the genius of our country.

Not only is the work of a great sculptor like Rodin quarantined, as it were, but the conditions are not created which would permit sculptors and painters to express themselves. What is asked of the sculptors Maillol and Despiaux?

* At the time of writing in the hands of a reactionary majority.—*Trans.*

What is done to open new horizons to the artists, to give them the possibility of devoting themselves to their art?

Such a question leads us to raise the problem of the inadequacy of the funds allotted for the fine arts, an inadequacy which must rapidly be overcome if our country wishes to remain faithful to its artistic traditions, and if it wishes to enrich its cultural heritage.

I should now like to say several words about music and musicians.

Too often our country is presented as a country without music, as if France were not the country of song, the country of Lulli, Rameau, Berlioz and Debussy. French musical production takes a leading rank among the musical productions of all countries. Nor can it be forgotten that Gounod and Bizet brought applause for French music throughout the world, and that the contemporary music of our country, with Chabrier, with Albert Roussel, who was president of the People's Music Federation, with Ravel, is a splendid continuation of the French musical tradition.

As for us Communists, we can recall that a musician like Erik Satie, who was the master and the friend of composers who are now the honor of French music, was a member of our Party.

The problems which are raised on the plane of music are, on the one hand, the development of the musical education of the people and, on the other hand, the adoption of steps to make possible the performance of great musical works.

In addition, much has been said about forming a French Salzburg, now that the native land of Mozart has ceased to be free, now that it has been subjected to the swastika rule. We think that this idea can and must become a reality. Yes, a French musical center must be created, and

national interests require that it be done quickly so that we shall not see this idea, which sprang from the soil of France, adopted and put into effect abroad.

French artistic production is a function of the cultural penetration of our country abroad, and I will be permitted to say in passing that it would be particularly useful to create posts of cultural attachés to all embassies and legations. They could contribute strongly to the increase of our national prestige.

I wish to pass now to examination of the state of the French theatre, which occupies such an important place in the world history of the theatre.

The French theatre, which was carried to such heights by Molière, and in the course of the past century has had a magnificent development, has been admirably served by great artists. The names of Talma, Frédéric Lemaître, Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt and Réjane are indissolubly bound up with the theatrical history of France. Similarly the names of the great directors, Gémier and Antoine, cannot be separated from the history of the contemporary theatre, which is being served with infinite talent by men like Jouvet, who has the right to claim the honor of bringing new life to Molière, by men like Dullin, like Baty and Pitoëf.

But the theatre, the true, good theatre, is far from the people because of the lack of appropriate theatres and the fact that theatrical road tours are not systematically organized. Would it not be useful to organize theatrical road tours through the provincial cities to make known both the classical works and the plays of modern authors? What a magnificent outlet could be found for the constellations of artists who would contribute to the great renown of the French theatre, not only in France but also abroad.

Furthermore, as for theatrical tours abroad, so useful for French interests, everything has still to be done. When countries in Latin America or the Balkans, for example, request artists in France, we are obliged to reply that it is impossible, because nothing has been provided, nothing has been organized and, naturally, funds are lacking. Faced by such bankruptcy—which my friend Berlioz, *rapporteur* on the Fine Arts budget, * has vigorously condemned—it is important to raise clearly the problem of the organization of theatrical tours abroad, required by the honor of the French theatre and the interests of France.

As for the French cinema, it can be said to have taken a high place in world production by its quality. And while the French film industry, with great directors like Jean Renoir and René Clair, produces very fine films, we see the German cinema, which had its period of greatness before the triumph of Hitlerism, plunged into mediocrity.

It is understandable that the French cinema, served by great actors, should be the target of a plot, which must be mentioned briefly. German film companies are busy at this moment producing French films in Germany with the assistance of French producers, in order to give a French seal to films whose scenarios have been censored by Dr. Goebbels. There is an immoral element in this against which we must protect the French cinema—which does not even have a director's school and thus obliges the masters of the cinema to train themselves at their own risk and peril.

Moreover, film production is in the hands of the trusts, and, in the interest of the French film industry itself, it would be useful to create a Film Office permitting the directors and artists to work for the glory of the French

* In the Chamber of Deputies.—*Trans.*

film without falling under the axe of all-powerful trusts which consider film production simply from the viewpoint of profits and not from the viewpoint of the cultural interests of France.

Besides, I cannot conclude my observations on cinema without remarking that a great American animated cartoon film was shown in France several months after the French inventors of the animated cartoon, Cohl and Meliès, whose creative efforts went completely disused in our country, died in poverty.

IV

After having examined the various branches of scientific and cultural activity, permit me to consider the teaching body, whose aspirations I have already mentioned but whose needs I wish to recall.

The big problem raised now for all teachers, for the professor as well as for the teacher, is the problem of salary and pension increases. Already prior to the third devaluation of the franc, the Teachers' Union demanded a ten percent wage increase; it is now demanding that this increase begin on June 1, that is, today. We are entirely in agreement with this demand, which is of unquestionable moderation, since the increase, taking into account the indices of the cost of living, should be 20 percent and more. I hardly need to say that my Party intends to support with all its forces, in Parliament and in the country, the demands of the teachers and all civil service employees.

Furthermore, among the questions with which we are concerned is that of the reform of the educational system. We all know that there are two plans, one coming from the Teachers' Union and the C.G.T. (General Confedera-

tion of Labor), the other of government origin, having been proposed March, 1937. These two plans, both quite similar, are based on the fundamental idea of the democratization of the secondary school system of choice of students. In fact, the present system of selection is selection by chance, not by merit and aptitude. No doubt we will hear the objection that this reform, like so many others, is subordinated to financial problems.

We know that study scholarships are not enough to permit access of workers' and peasants' sons to secondary schools. Maintenance scholarships are necessary, and for the poorest families we must even consider a certain compensation for the lack of income caused by the inability of the young man or woman to aid his or her parents. Many young people who could have made successful use of secondary school education have been stopped in their intellectual development because of the difficult economic situation of their parents. This is an injustice from the human viewpoint and a heresy from the social viewpoint. This heresy would finally consecrate, if it were not corrected, the superiority of selection by money over selection by intelligence.

These are our reasons for wholeheartedly supporting the entire teaching body, which, by demanding reform of education, is loyal to its past of liberal thought and progress.

After having spoken of those who train the mind, I want to speak of those who save life.

French doctors are the direct inheritors of Descartes, in whom rationalism and experimental medicine fused. While mankind has been decimated by epidemics for centuries, thanks to medicine life has now become more certain and the forces of death working to undermine life are retreat-

ing before science. Perhaps the most noble of human activities is the activity of the engineers of life, the doctors, in whom theory and day-to-day practice are joined.

We understand, perhaps better than others, all the value of this permanent alliance of theory and practice because we, too, associate practice and theory on the social plane.

More than others, perhaps, the doctors are in a position, through their contact with living matter, to feel how everything schematic is opposed to life; more than others they can have the sense of relativity because they are in a position to verify simultaneously the strength and the weakness of science.

It is not by accident that there is a sort of affinity between the social and medical worlds. Nothing can be planned on the social plane without the problem of the protection of man's health, the most precious capital, intervening. But of all sciences it is perhaps medicine which suffers most from the oppression of economic forces. It is these suffocating forces which tend to lower medicine and deprive it of its character of scientific apostleship.

It has been claimed that we are partisans of some sort of bureaucratization of doctors. Our only thought is to insure the free functioning of medicine by guaranteeing to each individual the right to choose his own doctor, because we think this is a problem of the highest importance, since the element of confidence plays a more important role in medicine than in other fields. The doctor in whom one confides wholly knows well that in addition to the care he can give the body, the encouragement he can bestow is of great aid for the patient, and that is why the doctors have scientific and human truth on their side in defending the right to the free choice of a doctor.

The situation of the doctor is closely bound up with that of the broad masses of the people. Poverty and ig-

norance are the enemies of the doctor, and that is why a natural alliance must exist between the doctors and those who struggle against both ignorance and poverty. In our municipalities where we have created dispensaries, we work not in competition with the doctors but to bring their patients closer to them and to make it impossible that sick men should go untreated in the midst of the twentieth century, while there are doctors without patients. Everything which tends to lower the living standards of the people constitutes a menace for the doctor whose mission of humanity must be not only respected, but protected.

And now, after these remarks on the engineers of life, I would like to speak of those in whom is incarnated the power of man over matter, the engineers, technicians, architects, in a word, the builders.

What is the tragedy against which these men, who only ask to create, are struggling? In the first place they are forced to observe the disproportion existing between what has been done and what could be done. What great plans are dreamed, what ambitious projects half-seen, what great things thought; and then, at last, all these enthusiastic dreams crash against the pitiless limits fixed by capitalist profits!

The very basis of our doctrine is that it is necessary to liberate technique from these reactionary fetters. It is only because the Soviet Union proceeded to this liberation of technique that the Five-Year Plan has been able to present the magnificent spectacle of a great people at the height of activity, damming rivers, connecting seas, making giant factories rise from the steppes, building gigantic cities from the ground up, placing a camp of scientists at the North Pole, making ancient Russia the most highly indus-

trialized country of Europe—all this at a pace unprecedented in history.

In the society which we shall build there will be no limits to the development of technique. It will always place new tasks before the creative will of man, which capitalist interests will no longer fetter in its struggle to dominate nature, to bring matter under the control of reason.

Our Communist Party rises out of the working class, which itself rises out of modern technique; the Communist workers and the technicians therefore have the same historical roots, and without each other they cannot complete the great mission of the liberation of technique. And, in addition to this common historic origin, there is a similarity in the working methods of the technicians who transform matter by the scientific method and the Communists who work to transform society by the scientific method too.

What we want is a rational direction for society, production and the distribution of products according to a plan constantly directed towards the continuous growth of human needs. No doubt many persons speak of plans without thinking of the obstacles which capitalist interests constitute, but for Communists a planned economy is neither an election poster nor a utopia, as the example of the Soviet Union shows. As for the totalitarian regimes which attempt to create illusions with their purported planning, they are building, with war as the goal, upon the shifting sands of contradictory capitalist interests, but what they call a plan is in reality only the subordination of economy to a policy of war and to the interests of the most powerful capitalist groupings.

While technique is thus placed in the service of war by governments of oppression and prey, we in France are far from utilizing all the energies for doing things in the various domains of technique. In our country, which was the

cradle of aviation, we have now reached the point of buying airplanes abroad though we lack neither technicians nor workers to build the necessary aircraft.

What is necessary today is a bold policy of great public works to raze the slums and build healthful buildings, to build hospitals and schools, to dig canals, to establish sport fields, stadiums, and also to rebuild our Paris region, which has developed, as you know, without a rounded-out plan. This would give the technicians, the engineers and the architects, who rightfully are anxious for the protection of their professions, an opportunity to express themselves in lasting works. This is what they ask, and they would also prefer not to be compelled by capitalist profiteers to work too often on the margin of safe construction and health protection. But too often, unfortunately, engineers and architects, instead of being able to build, are turned into office employees, the victims of the selfish interests opposed to the interests of society. French technicians and workers, joined in mutual confidence, are capable of doing great things; what must be done is to give them the opportunity.

Instead of fighting the forty-hour week at the same time that there are 400,000 wholly unemployed and a considerable amount of partial unemployment, it would be better to organize work in shifts in order to enable the worker to rest and to insure maximum output by the machine.

V

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have just sketched before you the broad outlines of a human society which tomorrow will be a world-wide reality.

These profound transformations will be written into fact—

No, man will not be eternally opposed to himself.

No, man will not be eternally forced to waste his energy in class struggles and war.

No, man will not see poverty eternally rising out of abundance.

No, man will not be eternally a wolf for man.

Whatever is said, whatever is done, nothing will halt the march of history.

Nothing will prevent, finally, the establishment of a society of harmony of work and progress, a society born of science.

Certain of the future of the cause to which we have given ourselves, we know that men who today do not think as we do, tomorrow will be at our sides, because they will have followed the road which, in the expression of Victor Hugo, leads from darkness to light.

We also know that there are many men of every position who do not go as far as we do, but, no matter, today it is not only a question of discussing the progress to be achieved, we must see first of all the setbacks to be avoided.

Two mortal dangers menace the entire heritage of human civilization: fascism which kills liberty, and war which kills man. Humanity is menaced by a new Middle Ages, blacker than the first, for this time scientific destruction would be added to obscurantism. When we think that it would require only a single airplane bomb to destroy Notre-Dame and at the same time to kill human beings, and when we think that the leader of the Nazi youth has said: "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver," we grasp what horror the triumph of the unleashed barbaric forces would represent.

What we must avoid is the vain discussion of the Byzantine metaphysicians at the hour when danger was all about them.

Whatever opinion you have of our ideas, I am sure that we are agreed on the necessity to protect civilization, of which you are the representatives, and the heritage of which is claimed by the people.

We are agreed to act so that France may live.

We are agreed that France should become greater in the eyes of the civilized world by raising higher than ever the torch of intelligence.

We are agreed that France should be, more than ever, the home of enlightenment.

The unity of science and work, of the intellectuals and the people, that, we think, is the key to the future.

The idea of the unity of the intellectuals was already expressed in the Manifesto of the Thirteen,* which appeared under the signature of quite different men who were all animated by the same desire to bring together the spiritual forces of our country against the common danger. We also know that representatives of the intellectuals are thinking of the possibility of holding a National Assembly of French Intellectuals to proclaim the rights of culture and science, which we know cannot be separated from national interests. It is certain that if such a movement takes shape, the world of labor will greet it with joy, for the workers know that their destiny is bound up with that of the intellectuals.

As for us Communists, we know that the strength, the greatness and the unity of the bearers of science and culture will be strikingly affirmed, in the very interest of

* Thirteen leading French intellectuals of various tendencies and religious beliefs early in 1938 issued a declaration urging unity against fascism.—*Trans.*

human progress. Just as we have confidence in the destiny of mankind, so we have confidence in French intellectuals, the inheritors of a magnificent past of creation and struggle, and so we have confidence in the destiny of France.

If we all desire it, and we all must desire it, the country of Descartes will remain the country of reason triumphant.

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